

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 2

**Output Group:** 2.4 – Funding for higher education

#### **DEST Question No. E754\_04**

Senator Carr asked on 20 February 2004, EWRE Hansard page 2.

#### **Question:**

I would like to know the most recent evaluation (of the GSA) that has been undertaken and the results of that evaluation.

#### **Answer:**

##### *GSA Evaluation*

The most recent evaluation of the GSA was published in July 2002, following the first two GSA tests in semester two 2000 and semester one 2001. It was specifically aimed at evaluating the validity, accuracy and effectiveness of the test instrument in measuring generic skills of university students and graduates. The student test sample was 3,663 students drawn from nine broad fields of study and across 27 Australian universities. This validity study was conducted by test administrators, the Australian Council for Educational Research.

The GSA is intended to measure five separate generic skill areas; written communication (argument writing), written communication (report writing), critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal understandings. The validity study report concluded that the GSA test does measure each of the five skill domains separately and effectively and that the test is generally reliable.

The validity study also looked at correlations between student performance on the GSA and characteristics such as field of study, year level, familiarity with English, gender and age. A high correlation across the sample size was found between student performance on the GSA and their Grade Point Average performance.

Various stakeholders and content experts were asked to evaluate the GSA as part of the validity study. In general, the test received a positive response from content experts, graduate recruiters and students.